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***Moma alpium* Osbeck (Lep.: Noctuidae) – decline in awareness of its dimorphic character in Britain**

Edward Newman's 1872 work *An Illustrated Natural History of British Moths* was published when the study of British moths was still in its infancy. Nevertheless, his volume portrayed excellent black and white illustrations of two forms of *Moma alpium* – typical *alpium* and ab. *runica* Stephens, and suggesting that "it is very probable that there are two species combined under one name" and also that J. Stephens was of that opinion. However, Newman made no reference to the relative frequency of the two forms. Barrett (1896. *The Lepidoptera of the British Islands*, 111) illustrated both these forms and a further more lightly marked specimen. It would seem that he was aware of the the relative frequency of the two forms in Britain, labelling the first specimen *orion*, the specific name used for the species at that time, and the second as an aberration obtained by Dr. Chapman – the scarcer form and that accepted as the type form of *M. alpium* to-day. The third important work on British moths produced in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the un-illustrated *British Noctuae and their Varieties* (Tutt, 1891); this demonstrated his awareness of the relative incidence of the two forms, stating "in a long series I have only one specimen that represents the type, all the others having single transverse lines and thus representing ab. *runica*". These volumes have now been largely superseded by modern ones less detailed in character, and the result has been a generation of lepidopterists unaware of the dimorphic nature of *M. alpium*. Early in the twentieth century South (1907. *Moths of the British Isles*) was published in two volumes and rapidly became the main source of information on British moths, not being supplanted until Skinner (1984. *Colour Identification Guide to the Moths of*

the British Isles). Decline in detail of this species began with South's work and it gave only one illustration, that of ab. *runica*, although both forms are described briefly, but without reference to their significance. L. W. Newman (1913. *Text Book of British Moths*) merely mentions ab. *runica* being a lightly marked variety. Under the editorship of J. Heath (1979. *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*) the first volume of a more ambitious project appeared. It too portrays only one form, the scarce type form, and its relative frequency is noted. However, what promised to be a replacement for "South" failed to materialise, and twenty-five years later remains incomplete, necessitating an alternative venture – Skinner's 1984 *Colour Identification Guide to the Moths of the British Isles*. A coloured plate illustrates the common ab. *runica*, not named as such and the species' dimorphism is not mentioned. Chalmers-Hunt (1960. *The Butterflies and Moths of Kent*. Suppl. Ent. Rec. 72-93) remains the most accurate and detailed local work on the British macro-lepidoptera; uniquely it contains a wealth of information on infra-specific forms recorded within the county, but unaccountably not on *M. alpium*!

During the period 1960 to 1990, I made a number of visits to the woods of East Kent at the time of the moth's appearance, and I estimate the incidence of the type form is about 15%, thus higher than indicated by Tutt's long series. I can find no reference to the subject for the other colonies of *M. alpium* in Britain.

Several other aberrations have been described, including ab. *fasciata* Lenz. This possesses "a joined-up black band in the middle of the forewings". I have one specimen from East Kent in the *runica* form, dated 28.vi.1968. Two lightly marked aberrations have also been described, but I have encountered neither, nor any tendency towards such forms in the East Kent population.— B. K.WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HH.

Species of Lepidoptera new to the Isle of Wight in 2004

I recorded, ten *Cydia amplana* (Hb.) (Tortricidae) at light in my garden at Totland, between 30 July and 21 August 2004. However on looking through my collection of micros I noticed a series of five of this species taken on 20 August 1996. These appear to be new county records.

Dr David Biggs found, many mines of *Phyllonorycter platani* (Stdgr.) (Gracillariidae), mostly vacated, but some still tenanted, on *Platanus hispanica* at Fairlee, Newport on 27 September 2004.

Dr. David Biggs found one mine of *Cameraria ohridella* Des. & Dim. (Gracillariidae) with actively feeding larvae on *Aesculus hippocastanum* at Pelham Woods, Ventnor on 15 September 2004. He also recorded this species at St. Laurence, Ryde and Newport later in the month.— SAM KNILL-JONES, 1 Moorside, Moons Hill, Totland, Isle of Wight PO39 OHU.